

NORFOLK SMALLHOLDERS



TRAINING GROUP

Harrowing Times

September– October 2017

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Smallholder Sid...

...and - "is this a dead frog?"

They were nicely settled into the snug at the Fly and Cowpat. Pints of Old Fart sat frothing in front of Smallholder Sid, Allotment Holder Alice and Farmer Fred. Since we last saw them the romance between Alice and Fred had progressed. They had both arrived together in Fred's pickup and Sid was sure that he heard Fred call her 'darling' - though he was not really paying any attention because he had frogs on his mind.

He wanted to discuss his conundrum with the other two but they insisted on talking about greenfly and whether neonicotinoids are going to wipe out the honey bee population (and all of us as well). Farmer Fred thought that all this stuff about pesticides was nonsense but Sid and Alice disagreed passionately. It looked for a moment as though Alice and Fred were going to have a lovers' tiff over the fate of bees but the infusion of another pint of Old Fart helped to restore world peace.

At last there was a lull in the conversation. With a flourish, Sid produced from his pocket a small container not much larger than a matchbox.

"Now I want you to tell me," he said conspiratorially "If these frogs are dead or alive."

"I hope you haven't got live frogs in that box. I know they're pretty stupid but it is not fair on them to squeeze them into such a small space," warned Fred. "They like ponds and water lilies to sit on."

Alice went pale. She said she did not like the slimy things and certainly did not want frogs hopping around in the snug.

Gingerly Sid opened the box. Fred leaned forward. Alice leaned back with a, "If you let them frogs out I'm off home now."

But Fred frowned.

"What's got into you Sid? Are you on something? They're earrings, not frogs, and they are certainly not alive."

"That's my point my boy." Sid had recently taken to calling Fred 'my boy' even though Fred was a good 10 years older. He winced every time Sid called him that.

"No, my boy, the wife wanted some earrings and she is ever so fond of frogs, so I thought I would buy her some frog earrings. They cost me £9.60 and they are genuine imitation silver. Now Gladys won't wear them because she says they are dead frogs."

Alice now joined the conversation, relieved that there was not a single frog jumping around in the snug. She asked to take a look.

"Hmm, they've got their legs straight, like they have been laid out for a funeral. I think frog earrings should have their legs bent, like they are swimming. I think Gladys is right. Them's dead frogs."



“Nah” interrupted Fred, “They’re leaping frogs. They have just leapt through the air from one lily pad to another and the jeweller caught them at the moment when they were in flight. They’re alive alright.”

“Well that’s what I thought” said Sid miserably, “but Gladys has been asking around. She even spoke to the ladies in the post office and they all said the frogs were dead.”

Fred and Alice nearly had another lovers’ tiff over the life or death of the earrings. It was only when Sid invested in more Old Fart for everyone that they paid him attention.

“Why not ask for your money back? Tell them you wanted live frogs not dead ones,” they both said at the same time.

“Tried that but they refused to refund my money as they are personal items of jewellery. Now I am £9.60 down. I don’t wear earrings and Gladys does not want them.” ♦

Serious legal note. Sid lost his £9.60. Under the Consumer Rights Act 2015 When you buy goods from a shop (any goods – from earrings to cars, cereal to shoes), they must be

- Of satisfactory quality
- Fit for purpose
- As described

Sid’s problem was that he had seen the earrings before he bought them. They were cheap but the quality was ok. They were fit for purpose (at least fit for Gladys’s ears) and they were as described.

If you change your mind, many shops will give you a credit note or refund your money, but they are not obliged by law to do so, and many will not change things where there might be some issue like passing on infection (let me quickly say that I am not suggesting for a moment that Gladys’s ears were infected).

If Sid had asked – before buying - whether he could return the earrings if Gladys did not like them, and if the shop agreed, then that would have been different; but he did not do that and now he is lumbered with the dead frogs – and he has not even had his ears pierced!

By Richard Barr

For more of what he writes log onto www.richardbarrwriter.co.uk

Listen to him from time to time on BBC Radio Norfolk (the Chrissie Jackson show)



Felbrigg Hall

September 9th - 10th

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